TWELVE JAPANESE PAINTERS

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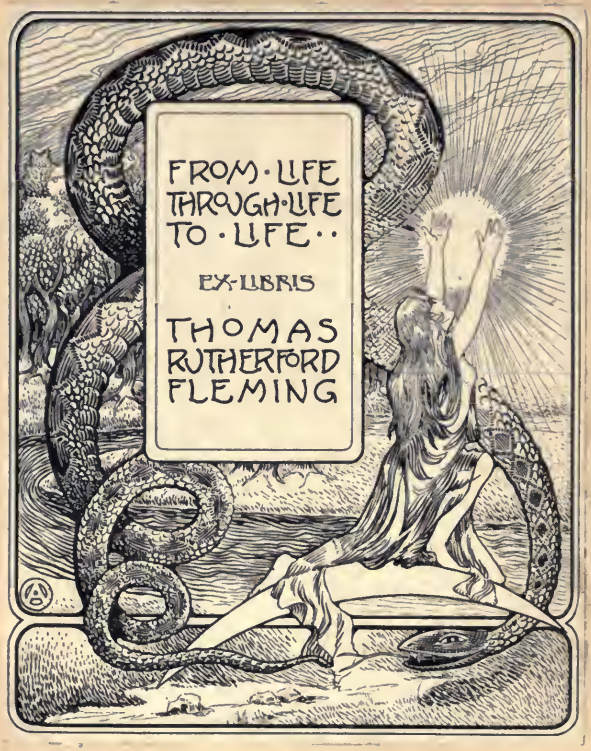
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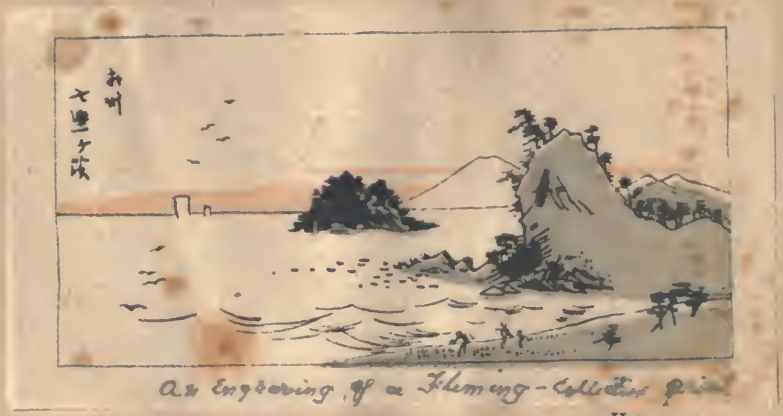


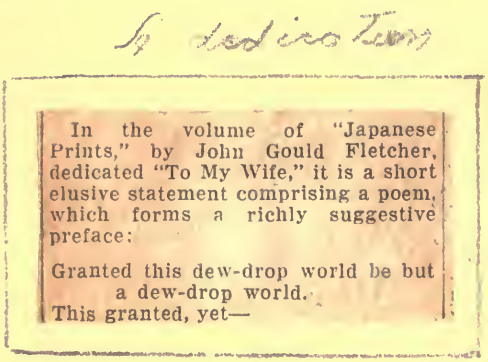
—Hiroshige.

A JAPANESE PRINT

By Ruth Mason Rice

"A curve for the shore,
A line for the lea,
A tint for the sky—
Where the sun-rise will be;
A stroke for a gull,
A sweep for the main;
The skill to do more;
With the will to refrain."

TWELVE JAPANESE PAINTERS



In the volume of "Japanese Prints," by John Gould Fletcher, dedicated "To My Wife," it is a short elusive statement comprising a poem, which forms a richly suggestive preface:

Granted this dew-drop world be but
a dew-drop world.
This granted, yet—

Japanese Print

(Cinquains)

I

Purple
Shore lines
Gather up the moon-glow
Leaving these deep still waters
To the night

II

Boatmen
Are silhouettes
In their low cabin door
And willow branches spill across
The moon.

III

Within
The lit doorway
The kodanshi repeats
An old tale to a listening
Shadow.

IV

Cargoes
Of ageless dreams
Drift by in little boats
That ride in the long wake of
A full moon.

ETHEL LOUISE KNOX.

TWELVE JAPANESE PAINTERS

BY

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

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ORIENTAL SCHOLAR DIES

CHICAGO, Jan. 18. (AP)—Dr. Frederick William Gookin, 83 years of age, oriental scholar and curator of Japanese prints at the Chicago Art Institute, died of pneumonia last night at his home in suburban Winnetka.

L. A. Times - Jan. 18- 1936

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The Ralph Fletcher Seymour Company
Fine Arts Building Chicago

The Ukioye School of Japanese painting, best known of all Japanese schools, but still too little known, is the theme of this group of poems. It were too much to hope that, through them, any new lover could be led to these remarkable paintings and prints; but at least a few old lovers may be interested to examine an attempt at voicing certain impressions which these works produce in all who are familiar with them.

For the cover-design of this volume, the author is deeply indebted to Mr. Frederick W. Gookin.

PROLOGUE

As chosen guests ye may partake
Of this strange hostel's ancient wine.
For thirst no common drink can slake,
Tapsters of lineage divine
Here pour sweet anodyne.

The hurly-burly of the road,
The turmoil of the carters' feet,
Intrude not to this still abode
Where travelers from the world-ends meet,
And find the gathering sweet.

Hence may perhaps some secret gleam
Follow along our onward way,
From evening feast with lords of dream,
As we go forth into the gray
Tomorrow's cloudy day.

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TWELVE JAPANESE PAINTERS

HARUNOBU

FIGURE OF A GIRL
BY HARUNOBU

WINDS

THAT somewhere in
the West,—
In gulfs of sunset, isles
of rest,—
Rise dewy from pre-
natal sleep
To strew with little
waves the deep,—
Surely it is your breath
that stirs
These fluttering gauzy
robes of hers!

Come whence ye may, I marvel not
That ye are lured to seek this spot:
Your tenuous scarcely-breathèd powers
Sway not the sturdier garden-flowers,
And had unmanifest gone by—
Save that she feels them visibly.

O little winds, her little hands
In time with tunes from faery-lands
Are moving; and her bended head
Knows nothing of the long years sped
Since heaven more near to earth was hung,
And gods lived, and the world was young.

Her inner robe, of tenderest fawn,
In cool faint fountains of the dawn
Was dyed; and her long outer dress
Borrows its luminous loveliness
From some clear bowl with water filled
In which one drop of wine was spilled.

Peace folds her in its deeps profound;
Her shy glance lifts not from the ground;
And through this garden's still retreat
She moves with tripping silver feet
Whose trancéd grace, where'er she strays,
Turns all the days to holy days.

Hers is the boon of manifold
Small joys that never can grow old.
Though her poised head and quiet eye
The mood of these light steps deny,
It is the playful solemn art
Of childhood innocence of heart.

Come! let us softly steal away.
For what can we, whose hearts are gray,
Bring to her dreaming paradise?
A chill shall mock her from our eyes;
A cloud shall dim this radiant air:
Come! for our world is otherwhere.

But O ye little winds that blow
From golden islands long ago
Lost to our searching in the deep
Of dreams between the shores of sleep,—
Ye shall her happy playmates be,
Fluttering her robes invisibly.

II

KORIUSAI SPEAKS

Let whoso will take sheets as wide
As some great wrestler's mountain-back:
Space will not hide
His lack.

Take thou the panel, being strong.
'Tis as a girl's arm fashioned right,—
As slender and divinely long
And white.

That tall and narrow icy space
Gives scope for all the brush beseems.
And who shall ask a wider place
For dreams?

It is an isle amid the tide,—
A chink wherethrough shines one lone star,—
A cell where calms of heaven hide
Afar.

One chosen curve of beauty wooed
From out the harsh chaotic world
Shall there in solitude
Be furled.

The narrow door shall be so strait
Life cannot vex, with troubled din,
Beauty, beyond that secret gate
Shut in.

Lo! I will draw two lovers there,
Alone amid their April hours,
With lines as drooping and as fair
As flowers.

I will make Spring to circle them
Like a faint aureole of delight.
Their luminous youth and joy shall stem
The night.

And men shall say—Behold! he chose,
From Time's wild welter round him strown,
This hour; and paid for its repose
His own.

III

PORTRAIT OF AN ACTOR IN TRAGIC ROLE BY SHUNSHO

His soul is a sword;
His sword with the spirit's breath
Is bathed of its terrible lord,
In whose eyes is death.

And the massive control,
And the lighted implacable eye
Leash a fierce and exalted soul
Of dark destiny.

* * * *

With the strength of the hills,—
Kiso's iron mountains of snow,—
He waits: time brings and fulfills
The hour for the blow.

He waits; and the white
Full robes round his shoulders sway,
With woof of pale orange alight,
Pale green, pale gray.

Like a falcon, flown
To bleak mid-regions of sky,
He poises. One image alone
Holds his sinster eye,—

A vision, a prey
Toward which he shall soon be hurled;—
And his fury shall darken the day,
And his joy, the world.

* * * *

A music enfolds him
Like the thunders that are poured
Across heaven; it holds him
With the song of the sword.

It enthralls, it inspires,
And its zenith shall be
Lightning of unleashed desires
Crashing along the sea.

IV

FESTIVAL SCENE BY KIYONAGA

What gods are these, reborn from gracious days
To fill our gardens with diviner mould
Than therein dwelling? What bright race of old
Revisits here one hour our mortal ways?
Serene, dispassionate, with lordly gaze
They move through this clear afternoon of gold,
Equal to life and all its deeps may hold,
Calm, spacious masters of the glimmering maze.

What gods are these? or godlike men? whom earth
Suffices, in a wisdom just and high
That not repines the boundaries of its birth
But fills its destined measure utterly—
Finding in mortal sweetness perfect worth,
Not yet grown homesick for the wastes of sky.

The master print
A festival Scene by Kiyonaga

V

DRAMATIC PORTRAIT BY SHARAKU

Whence art thou come,
Tall figure clasping to thy tragic breast
Thy orange robe, a flame amid the gloom—
By what wild doom
Art thou forever onward, onward pressed?

A wreath is on thy brow,—
A crown of leafage from some lonely haunt
Where might Medea's shade brood ministrant.
Thy shoulders bow
Beneath what fearful weight, what need, what vow?

A leopard fierce—
A ghost that wanders down the wandering wind—
A fury tracking toward some shaken mind,—
Where shall I find
The divination that thy veil shall pierce?

How shall I wrest
From thee the secret of thy lofty doom—
From what wild gulf of midnight thou dost come
Who, with clutched breast,
Stalkest forever onward,—onward pressed?

SHUNCHO

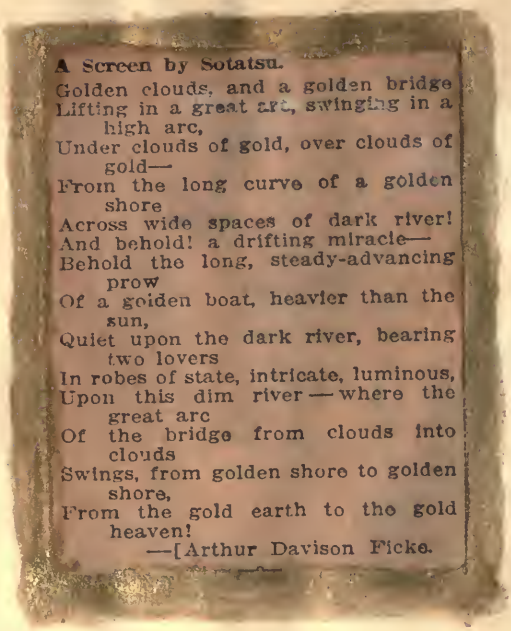
VI

GROUP OF WOMEN BY SHUNCHO

Your lovely ladies shall not fade
Though Yedo's moated walls be laid
Level with dust, and night-owls brood
Over the city's solitude.
Far be the coming of that day!
Yet that it comes not, who shall say?
Who knows how long the halls shall stand
Of your once-golden wonderland?
Perhaps shall Nikko crumble down,
Its carvings worn, its glow turned brown
Through many winters. On that hill
Where great Ieyasu's brazen will
In brazen tomb now takes its rest,
Perhaps the eagle's young shall nest.
Kyoto's gardens cannot last.
At Kamakura, where the vast
Form of the Buddha fronts the sea,
A waste of waves may someday be....

Ah, stale and flat the warning bell
Whose melancholy accents tell
Impermanence to hearts that guess
Time's undiscovered loveliness.
A fairer Yedo shall arise;
A richer Nikko praise the skies;
Ieyasus mightier than of old
Shall cast the world in wiser mould;
Fresh gardens shall be spread; new faith
Shall spring when Buddha is a wraith;—
And more puissant hands than yours
Shall paint anew life's ancient lures.
Yet when he comes who shall surpass

Your beauty that so matchless was,
A joy shall light him through your eyes,
A flame shall from your embers rise,
Your gentle art shall make him wise
In mastery of melodies.—
And though your wreath in dust be laid,
Your lovely ladies shall not fade!



A Screen by Sotatsu.

Golden clouds, and a golden bridge
Lifting in a great arc, swinging in a high arc,
Under clouds of gold, over clouds of gold—
From the long curve of a golden shore
Across wide spaces of dark river!
And behold! a drifting miracle—
Behold the long, steady-advancing prow
Of a golden boat, heavier than the sun,
Quiet upon the dark river, bearing two lovers
In robes of state, intricate, luminous,
Upon this dim river — where the great arc
Of the bridge from clouds into clouds
Swings, from golden shore to golden shore,
From the gold earth to the gold heaven!

—[Arthur Davison Ficke.

VII

TWO WOMEN BY KITAO MASANOBU.

What floors have ye trod? What sky-paven
places have opened their halls to your eyes?
What light was yours, through summerward spaces
watching the swallow that flies?
What holy silence has touched your faces—what
hush of paradise?

I think that he died of a longing unspoken who
dreamed you to walk in our ways.
The wheel at the cistern, the pitcher is broken: ye
wot not that dust decays—
Ye, torn from the heart of the dreamer as token to
dreamers of other days.

MASANOBU, OKUMURA.—Geisha in spring-time.

Yeishi

VIII

PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN BY YEISHI

I

Out of the silence of dead years
Your slender presence seems to move—
A fragrance that no time outwears—
A perilous messenger of love.

From far, your wistful beauty brings
A wonder that no lips may speak,—
A music dumb save as it clings
About your shadowy throat and cheek.

Longing is round you like that haze
Of luminous and tender glow
Which memory in the later days
Gives vanished days of long ago.

And he who sees you must retrace
All sweetness that his life has known,
And with the vision of your face
Link some lost vision of his own.

The long curves of your saffron dress,—
The outline of your delicate mould,—
Your strange unearthly slenderness
Seem like a wraith's that strayed of old

Out of some region where abide
Fortunate spirits without stain,
Where nothing lovely is denied,
And pain is only beauty's pain.

II

Strange! that in life you were a thing
Common to many for delight,
Thrall to the revelries that fling
Their gleam across the fevered night:—

A holy image in the grasp
Of pagans careless to adore;
A pearl secreted in the clasp
Of oozy weeds on some lost shore.

My thought shrinks back from what I see
And wanders dumb in poisoned air—
Then leaps, inexplicably free,
Remembering that you were fair!

III

Belovèd were you in your prime
By one, of all, who came as guest,—
A wastrel strange, whose gaze could climb
To where your beauty lit the west.

One,—in whose secret heart there moved
Some far and unforgotten stir
Of ancient holy beauties loved,—
Here paused, a sudden worshiper.

Methinks he moved in dusks apart
Through that profound and trembling hour
When you within his doubting heart
Touched all the desert into flower.

And where you rose a world's delight,
For him the dark veils from you fell,—
As earthly clouds from star-strewn night
Withdraw, and leave a miracle.

Not Oiran then, but maid; remote
From tyrant powers of waste desire.
Who drew these hands, this slender throat,
Saw you mid shaken winds of fire.

You were a shape of wonder, set
To crown the seeking of his days.
For you his lonely eyes were wet;
With you his soul walked shrouded ways.

And though the burning night might keep
You servient to some lord's carouse,
For him you rose from such a deep
With maiden dawn-light on your brows.

IV

Pale Autumn with ethereal glow
Hovered your delicate figure near;
And ever round you whispered low
Her voices, and the dying year.

A year,—a day,—and then the leaves
Purpureal, ashen, umber, red,
Wove for you both through waning eves
A gorgeous carpet gloomward spread.

And with that waning, you had gone,
Through changes that love fears to trace—
No later lover could have known
Your wistful and alluring face—

Your music, quivering in thin air,
Had fled with life that filled your veins—
But he for whom you were so fair
Dreamed; and the troubled dream remains.

V

Time, that is swift to smite and rend
The common things that spring from earth,
Dares not so surely set an end
To shapes of visionary birth.

There often his destroying touch
Lingers as with a lulled caress,
Adding, to that which has so much,
An alien ghostly loveliness.

So shall your beauty, crescent, pass
From me through many a later hand,
Each year more luminous than it was—
O April out of Sunset Land!

IX

LANDSCAPE BY HIROSHIGE

(The Bow-Moon)

Where the torrent leaps and falls,
And the hanging cliffs look down,—
Cloven gray and ruddy walls,
Each with ragged forest-crown,—

There across the chasmèd deep
Spans a gossamer bridge on high;
And below, from gulfs of sleep,
Mounts the Bow-Moon up the sky.

Blue dusk, thickening whence she rose,
Her abysses veils; above
Moves she into daylight's close
As faint strains of music move.

On the eastern slope her feet,—
White, in tranced ecstasy,—
Climb, a ghost of heaven, so sweet
That the spent day cannot die.

Walled by crags on either side
Glimmers forth her figure wan,
Straying like some lonely bride
Through the halls of Kubla Khan.

Pilgrim of the riven deep!
Wheresoe'er thy lover lie,
Sleep to him is troubled sleep
While his Bow-Moon haunts the sky.

Toyokuni I.—A noble youth with female attendants visiting a temple.

X

THE PUPIL OF TOYOKUNI

I walk the crowded Yedo streets.
And everywhere one question greets
My passing, as the strollers say—
"How goes the Master's work today?
We saw him sketching hard last night
At Ryogoku, where the bright
Trails of the rockets lit the air.
You should have seen the ladies there!
All the most famous of the town
In gorgeous robes walked up and down
The long bridge-span, well knowing he
Was there to draw them gorgeously.
I'm sure he'll give us something fine,—
Dark splendid figures, lights ashine,
A great procession of our best
And costliest Oiran, with the West
Burning behind them. When it's done,
Pray, of the copies, save me one."

Yes, I am pupil to the great.
How well he bears his famous state!
With what superbness he fulfills
The multitude's delighted wills,
Giving them, at their eager call,
Each play and feast and festival
Drawn with a rich magnificence:
And they come flocking with their pence
To buy his sheets whose supple power
Captures the plaudits of the hour,—
Till even Utamaro's eyes
Turn, kindled with swift jealousies.

Strange! that before this crowded shrine
One voice is lacking, and that mine,—
I, learner in his lordly house,—
I, on whose cold unwilling brows
The lights of his strong glory burn
Blinding my heart that needs must yearn
Far from the measure of his state,—
I, liegeman to another fate.
Would that some blindness came on me
That I might cease one hour to see
For all his high, ambitious will
His is a peasant's nature still.....
What utter madness that my thought
Weighs him,—I who am less than naught!
Where he walks boldly, there I creep.
Where his assured long brush-strokes sweep
Unhesitant, there I falter, strain
With agony,—perhaps in vain,—
For some more subtly curving line,
Some musical poising of design
That shall at last, at last express
My frailer glimpse of loveliness.
And yet, for all his facile art,
I hug my impotence to my heart.
For there are things his marching mind
In steady labors day by day
With all its sight shall never find,
With all its craft can never say.
There are lights along the dusky street
That his bold eyes have never caught;
There are tones more luminous, more sweet
Than any that his hopes have sought.
There are torturing lines that curve and fall
Like dying echoes musical,
Or twine and lace and bend and roll
In labyrinths to lure my soul.
His ladies sumptuous and rare

Move princess-like in proud design
Of glowing loveliness: but where
His bannered pomps and pageants shine,
I feel a stiller, rarer peace,
A cadence breathless, slender, lone.
And where his facile brush-strokes cease
Begins the realm that is my own.

I wander lonely by fields and streams.
I lie in wait for lingering dreams
That brood, a tender-lighted haze
Down the wide space of ending days,—
A secret thrill that hovering flies
Round some tall form, some wistful eyes,
Some thin branch where the Spring is green,—
A whisper heard, a light half-seen
By lonely wanderers abroad
In crowded streets or solitude
Of hills,—to haunt with dim unrest
The empty chambers of the breast.

Perhaps some day a heart shall come,
Like me half-blind, like me half-dumb,
Like me contentless with the clear
Sunlighted beauties men hold dear.
Perhaps he shall more greatly prize
My faltered whispers from afar
Than all the Master's pageantries
And confident pomp and press and jar.
Yet, well or ill, how shall I change
The measure doled, the nature given?
Mine is the thirst for far and strange
Echoes of a forgotten heaven.
I listen for the ghosts of sound;
Remote I watch life's eager stream;
Through wastes afar, through gulfs profound,
I, Toyohiro, seek my dream.

The Wave

(Hokusai's Picture)

What splendor in the upflung curve
That sprays pearl-froth upon the salt stung air!
What sublime intensity in the falling fluid form,
What glory crouches there!

What peace and stillness in Mount Fuji's noble form
Clear-glimpsed within that splendid wind-shaped arc!
It contradicts the writhing liveness of the wave
That makes one smell the sea and hear its voices—hark!

There, in a picture, is the facile wall of green inclosing one around.
The relentless crest hissing overhead and tossing its threatening hair,
A sense of being overwhelmed, submerged
In the irresistible coolness of water-beaten air.

It is a thing to make one's thoughts be filled with wonder—
This great crest leaping from the vastness of the sea,
Bravely beautiful as an eagle's pinions might be beautiful,
Stirring and glorious as the sound of a trumpet-call might be!

DOLORES CAIRNS.

XI.

LANDSCAPE BY HOKUSAI.

(The Wave at Kanazawa.)

Because thou wast marvelous of eye, magic of
fancy, lithe of hand,—
Because thou didst play o'er many a gulf where
common mortals dizzy stand,—
Because no thing in earth or sky escaped the pry-
ings of thine art,—
I call thee, who wast master of all, the master with
the [redacted]'s heart.

God-like

Where in the street the drunkards roll,—where
in the ring the wrestlers sway,—
Where rustics pound the harvest rice, or fishers sail,
or abbots pray,—
In rocky gorge, or lowland field, or winter heights
of mountain air,—
Wherever man or beast or bird or flower finds
place,—yea, everywhere,
Thou standest, as I fancy, rapt in the live play of
mass and line,
Curiously noting every poise; and in that ugly head
of thine
Storing it with unsated fierce passion for life's min-
utest part,
Some day to use infallibly,—O master with the
[redacted] heart!

God-like

Where Kanazawa's thundering shores behold the
mounded waters rave,
And Fuji looms above the plain, and the plain
slopes to meet the wave,—

There didst thou from the trembling sands unleash thy soul in sudden flight
To soar above the whirling waste with awe and wonder and delight.
Thou sawest the giant tumult poured; each slope and chasm of cloven brine
Called thee; and from the scattered rout one vision did thy sight divine—
One heaven-affronting whelming wave in which all common waves have part—
A billow from the wrath of God,—O ~~monkey~~ Master with ~~a master~~'s heart!

What mind shall span thee? Who shall praise or blame thy world-embracing sight
Whose harvest was each rock and wraith, each form of loathing or of light?
Though we should puzzle all our days, we shall not know thee as thou art,
Nor where the seer of visions ends, nor where begins the ~~monkey~~'s heart.

XII.

A GROUP OF LADIES BY TOYOHIRO.

O careless passer,—O look deep!
These forms from near the sea of sleep
Come hither: on each forehead gleams
The phosphorescent spray of dreams.
They have sailed in from lonely seas,
Cloaked in a haze of mysteries;
And hither by a lord are led
Who snared them, pale himself with dread,
Upon the very shores of sleep.
O careless passer-by, look deep!

The promenade
Wamaro

XIII.

PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN BY UTAMARO

I

In robes like clouds at sunset rolled
About the dying sun,—
In splendid vesture of purple and gold
That a thousand toiling days have spun
For thee, O imperial one!—

With the cunning pomp of the later years,
With their pride and glory and stress,
Thou risest; and thy calm forehead bears
These like a crown; but thy frail mouth wears
All of their weariness.

Thou art one of the great, who mayest stand
Where Cleopatra stood,
Aspasia, Rhodope, at each hand;
And even the proud tempestuous mood
Of Sappho shall rule thy blood.

Thy throat, in its slender whiteness bare,
Seems powerless to sustain
The gorgeous tower of thy gold-decked hair,—
Like a lily's stem which the autumn air
Maketh to shrink and wane.

More haunting music, more luring love
Round thy sinuous form hold sway
Than the daughters of earth have knowledge of;
For thou art the daughter of fading day,
Touched with all hope's decay.

And the subtle languor, the prismic glow
Of a ripeness overpast
Burns through the wonderful curving flow
Of thy garments; and they who love thee know
A loathing at the last.

For they are the lovers of living things,—
Stars, sunlight, morning's breath;
But thou, for all that thy beauty brings
Such songs as the Summer scattereth,—
Thou art of the House of Death.

II

But there was one, in thy golden day,
Who saw thy poppied bloom,
And loved not thee but the heart's decay
That filled thee; and clasped it to be alway
His chosen and sealed doom.

He who this living portrait wrought,
Outlasting time's control,
A dark and bitter nectar sought
Welling from poisoned streams that roll
Through deserts of the soul.....

III

Ah dreamer! come at last where dreams
Can serve no more thy need,
Who hast by such bright silver streams
Walked with thy soul that now earth seems
A waste where love must bleed,—

Thou whom such matchless beauty filled
Of visions frail and lone,—
For thee all passion now is stilled;
Thy heart, denied the life it willed,
Desireth rather none.

And thee allure no verdant blooms
That with fresh joy suspire;
But blossoms touched with coming glooms,
And weariness, and spent desire,
Draw to thy spirit nigher.

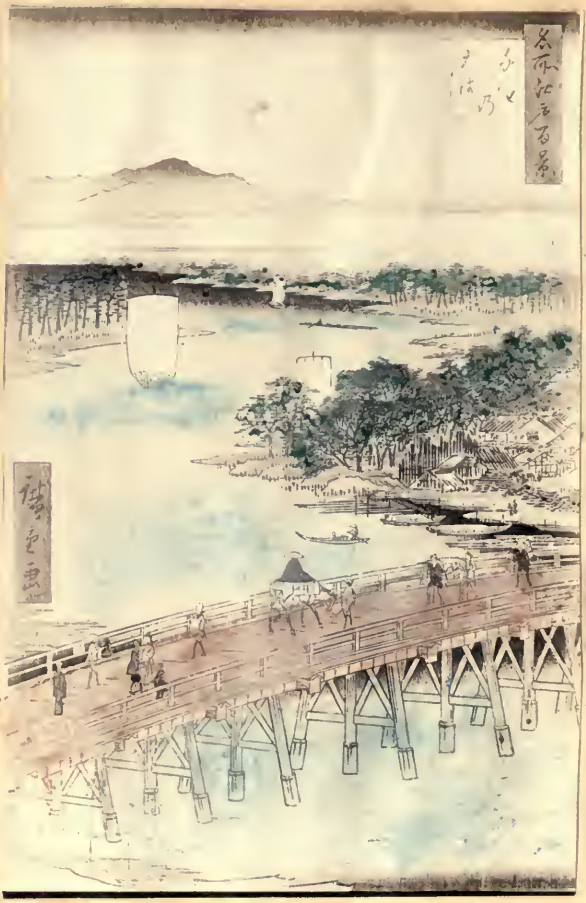
Wherefore is nothing in thy sight
Propitious save it be
Brushed with the wings of hovering night,
Worn with the shadow of delight,
Sad with satiety.

For thou hast enmity toward all
The servants of life's breath;
One mistress holdeth thee in thrall,
And them thou lovest who her call
Answer; and she is Death.

IV

Now Death thy ruined city's streets
Walketh, a grisly queen.
And there Her sacred horror greets
Him who invades these waste retreats,
Her sacrosanct demesne,—

In robes like clouds at sunset rolled
About the dying sun,
In splendid vestments of purple and gold
That a thousand perished years have spun
For Her, the Imperial One.



XIV

THE BIRDS AND FLOWERS OF HIROSHIGE

Alilt against the emerald sky,
A tiny violet songster swings,
Clutching a branch, in ecstasy
Of light and height and skiey things.
Singing, he swings; and swinging, I
For once am showered with joy of wings.

Keen and pure, of a magic power,
Thy rapture stirs what was never stirred.
Thou hast brought to earth a cloudland dower,—
The joy of the small sweet singing bird.
All time is richer for thy hour
Of delicate music, gravely heard.

Does the iris droop beneath the heat?
Its weariness finds voice in thee.
Does the pheasant run with snow-clogged feet?
Winter is theirs who thy vision see.
Is summer's glow to the swallow sweet?
Thou hast captured its summer eternally.

Thou hast wrought each as a lyric note
Pure with one mood of sky and trees
And flowers, and tiny lives that float
Or dart or poise in world of these.
The painter's hand, the thrush's throat,—
Which masters best these melodies?

Gusty rain through the treetops blown
And a bird that scuds where the gray gusts hiss,—
Sapphire wings and a golden crown
Flung skyward in unconscious bliss—
No rare enchanted bird has known
As thou hast known the savor of this!

And winning it, thou hast cast aside
Thy native bonds of mortal birth,—
Flinging the spirit-pinions wide
Above this world of weary worth,—
To float and poise and skyward ride
With them whose realm is not the earth.—

The peacock in his proud repose—
Wild-geese that rush across the moon—
The little sleepy owl that knows
The wind-among-the-tree-tops tune,—
The kingfisher that darts and glows
Over the reeds of the lagoon—

The flower-lured hummingbird that weaves
Spirals more delicate than they—
Sanderlings that on moonlit eves
Over the wave-crest swoop and play—
The crane that shores of sunset leaves
For sunset skies of far away.

XV

THE LANDSCAPES OF HIROSHIGE

As merchantmen from Eastern isles
In caravels of purple came,
With freight that alien heart beguiles,—
Incense, and cloths of woven flame,—

So down the gulfs of elder time
Thy glorious pinions bear to me
Mad treasure from the unknown clime
Of worlds beyond the Western Sea.

Now in my bay the sails are furled.
But I, who guess their native skies,
Henceforth must roam that golden world,
Where strange winds whisper and strange scents rise.

Immortal Fuji's snowy crown—
Wide seas with sky of amethyst—
A street where torrents thunder down—
Branches that toss against the mist—
Smooth hills and hill-girt plains where run
Streams through the rice fields steeped in heat—
Pines gnarled above a sunken sun—
Cold heights where cloud and mountain meet.

Now visions enter to my breast
That from thy passion won their birth
When like a bride in radiance dressed
Before thee glowed the summers of earth.

What magic gave thee to behold
This fairness, secret from our sight,
Where morning walks the world in gold,
Or seas turn gray with coming night?

For thee, as when the South Winds blow,
Lands burst to bloom. On every shore
Where beauty dwells thou didst bestow
A perilous mortal beauty more.

Twilight and morn on Biwa's breast—
Harima's sands and lordly pines—
White Hira-mountain's winter crest—
The low red dusk round Yedo shrines—
The moon beneath the Monkey Bridge—
The Poisoned River's brooding gloom—
Rose-dawn on some Tokaido ridge—
Pale water-worlds of lotus bloom.

Our toiling race is with the day
Wearied, and restless with the night,—
Unpausing, on its tombward way,
For fear or wonder or delight,—

Unwatchful, mid the somber things
That mesh us in a vain employ,
For peace that half of heaven brings,
For beauty that is wholly joy.

Lover for whom the world was wide!
Down lighted pathways thou didst move—
Where hills and seas and cities hide
So much for weary men to love.

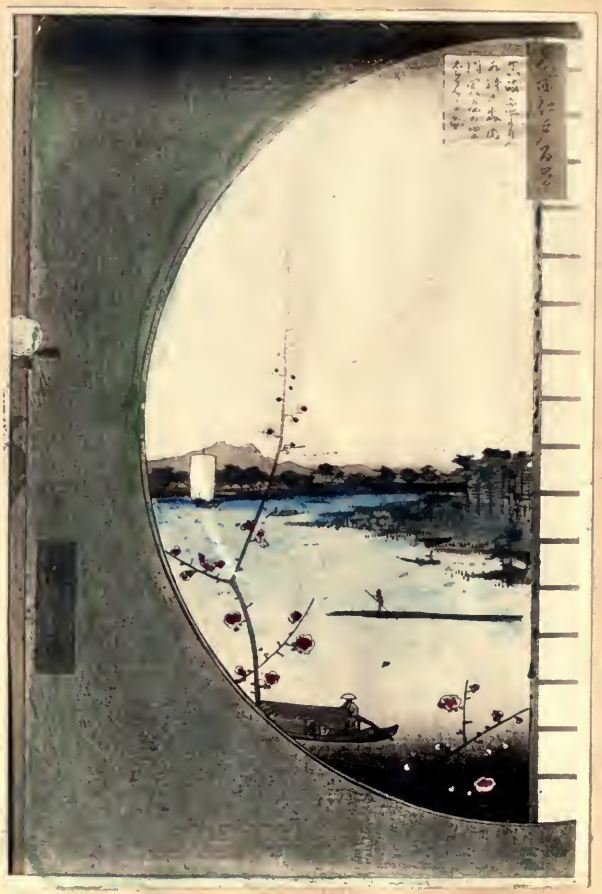
The mist of cherry trees in spring—
Ships sleeping on some bright lagoon—
A swallow's dusky sweeping wing—
Steep Ishiyama's autumn moon—
The changing marvels of faint rain—
The foam that hides the torrent's stream—
The eagle o'er the snowy plain—
Sea-twilights haunted as a dream.

Speaking, thou laidst thy brush aside,—
"On a long journey I repair—
Regions beyond the Western Tide—
To view the wonderful landscapes there."

Yet, at Adzuma, loosed from all
Thy mortal bonds, made free to roam,
Methinks thou couldst not break the thrall
That held thee to thy human home.

Surely no heaven could harbor thee,
Nor other world of keener bliss,
Who didst with such deep constancy
Worship the loveliness of this.—

Moon-flooded throngs in Yedo's streets—
Dawn-quickened travelers on their road—
Lone ocean-fronting hill retreats—
An Oiran's perilous-sweet abode—
A mighty Buddha by the sea
Where all the wondering pilgrims meet—
Immortal Fuji, changelessly
Watching the world around her feet.



Through a Window

EPILOGUE

Bring forth, my friend, these faded sheets,
Whose charm our labored utterance flies.
Perhaps our later search repeats
The groping of those scholars' eyes

Who, ere the dawned Renaissant day,
With duskèd sight and doubtful hand,
Bent o'er the pages of some gray
Greek text they could not understand;

Drawn by the sense that there concealed
Lay key to spacious realms unknown;
Held by the need that be revealed
Forgotten worlds to light their own.

Japanese Print

Featherlight, on a blossomy cherry
bough
A pensive bird high-lights a peaceful
scene—
Swung upward by invisible wires
A silvery moon like a lantern huge
Bathes with pearly, iridescent light
This valued Japanese colored print
That hangs upon my wall.

Beautiful you are as the memory
Of the old professor who brought
you
Across the waters to abide with me.
Beautiful, magical as sunlight
Warming and love-lighting a vast
landscape.
Mine for the eyes quick-garnering
For dreams—sweet lotus-land.

IDA CROCKER DUNCAN.

Hiroshige

In land of picture-books we wander,
By temple shrines enwreathed in snow
Softer than cherry blossoms. Yonder
A sea-strip—vivid indigo
Is flecked with fluttering wings of sail—
Then turn the page—
See where the cone of Fujiyama shines
Through slanting streaks of rain;
And straggling lines
Of toiling travelers on a pilgrimage,
Beaten by thwarting gale
Are struggling—vain—

To reach the arching bridge. There gray and pale
Pawlonia trees are shuddering in the storm—
Each tottering, unsubstantial form—
A witch in some old fairy tale.

And now in sunshine all the sea is dancing,
Rimmed with deep blue the distant hills—
While darting rays of light are glancing
From white-edged waves that crisp and curl
In whirlpools of innumerable rills,
That seethe and toss and swirl.

Then evening hushed and silvery-blue
In misty gloaming—
The tapestry of sky shot through
With star-points, keen and bright.
The woodland creatures all are roaming,
Roused from their dreaming—
Lo—on the hills the foxes white
In the blue shadows gleaming,
Gathered from some strange rite—far, far away
From all the haunts of man.
This is the wizard—this Hiroshige—
Painter of wistful, delicate Japan.

CHARLOTTE F. BABCOCK.

This edition of Twelve Japanese Painters, by Arthur Davison Ficke, is limited to 250 copies, of which 100 are for sale. Designed and printed by the Ralph Fletcher Seymour Company in Chicago, after which the type was distributed. March, MCMXIII.

Color Print by Hiroshige

A yellow raft sails up the bluest stream
And cherry-blossoms cloud the shore with pink;
The sky grows clearer with a curious gleam
And boys come playing to the river brink.

A grayish gull descends to preen and prink,
Far off, a singing plowman drives his team—
A yellow raft sails up the bluest stream
And cherry-blossoms cloud the shore with pink . . .

Oh, to be there; far from this tangled scheme
Of strident days and nights that flare and sink.
Beauty shall lift us with a colored dream;
And, as we muse, too rapt and wise to think,
A yellow raft sails up the bluest stream
And cherry-blossoms cloud the shore with pink.

—Louis Untermeyer.

Butterfly Poetry

The poetry of Japan reached its zenith . . . between the eighth and twelfth centuries. The eighth century poet, Hitomaro, wrote "long poetry." His verse consisted of alternating phrases of five and ten syllables. But, short as his poems were, they did not satisfy the Japanese delight in brevity, in the mere hint, and the tanka began to flit through Japan like a moth in the moonlight. It contains only thirty-one syllables, arranged in five phrases of five, seven, five, seven, and again seven syllables, but translators have seldom bound themselves by this arrangement: their effort has been to convey the lightness, the delicate flick, and wistful brevity of these little exclamatory poems.

The haikai was developed from the tanka by reduction; it is little more than half a tanka, for it runs to only seventeen syllables. It has been described as "a Japanese sketch, which encloses in a few precise strokes, either the subtlest details of a human chronicle or the spaces of an infinite landscape." Here is an early haikai:

"Thought I, the fallen flowers
Are returning to their branch:
But lo! they were butterflies."

Just a light, unexpected, and beautiful fancy put into beautiful words —more beautiful than can be conveyed in English.

The art of the haikai, and the Japanese feeling for it, are indicated in a delightful story which Mr. W. G. Aston tells, in his "History of Japanese Literature," of one of its greatest masters, Matsura Basho. One day, while travelling, he came on a party of peasants who were . . . throwing off haikais in competition. When he appeared the subject they had just selected was the full moon, and, under the impression that he was a wandering Buddhist priest, they invited him to join them and show what he could do. The great artist seemed to hesitate. He then began:

"Twas the new moon."

Whereupon they laughed and mocked him. "The new moon! What a fool this priest is! The poem should be about the full moon." "Let him go on," said another, "we shall have the better sport." Basho went on:

"'Twas the new moon!
Since then I waited—
And, lo! tonight!"

The little band fell into silent admiration, and, on learning who the stranger was, their spokesman apologized to the poet, "whose fragrant name was known to the whole world." . . .

"I come aweary,
In search of an inn—
Ah! these wistaria flowers." . . .

A larger theme is this landscape:

"Pilgrims on the road
Their bells swing
Above the harvest."

It may seem easy to produce these little gems of vision and feeling; but try!—From "Unposted Letters," by John O'London

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